

WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 12, 2016, 6:45 PM
GREAT HALL, WELLESLEY TOWN HALL

Members Present: David Giangrasso, Lisa Abeles, Edwina McCarthy, Barry Friedman, and David Smith
Members Absent: Eric Cohen
Staff: Heather Lamplough
Also Present: Ellen Watts, 25 Weston Road

Chairperson David Giangrasso called the meeting to order at 6:52pm.

Certificate of Appropriateness: 25 Weston Road HDC 16-02:

Documents:

1. *Staff Report, dated 04/05/2016*
2. *Site Visit Photographs, taken 04/05/2016*
3. *Letter from Applicant, dated March 9, 2016*
4. *Letter from Applicant, dated March 14, 2016*
5. *Site Plan titled "Proposed Improvements", dated March 20, 2015*
6. *Photographic examples of 'Chilmark' and 'Chestnut Hill' style fencing from Walpole Woodworkers*

Discussion:

Mr. Giangrasso opened the public hearing for the Certificate of Appropriateness. Miss Lamplough explained that while this is a simple change from the originally approved plans, it did constitute a design changes and therefore required a public hearing. Mr. Smith asked the applicant if they are changing the whole fence. Ms. Watts explained the proposed changes the Commission. She explained that they were intending to repair the stockade fence at the rear of the property, but after more damage was done to the fence it was decided that it is better to just replace the fence in its entirety. She explained the other change is to add a second leaf to a gate that was already approved by the parking area. She explained that the single leaf gate is not wide enough to get large things into the backyard (such as a dumpster), so they are proposing the second leaf to be able to do that in the future if needed. Ms. Abeles asked if the top of the fence was flat or if it is pitched. Ms. Watts stated that they would be pointed. Ms. Watts stated that the whole fence will be cedar, and will be painted.

Ms. Watts also updated the Commission on the exterior envelope project approved by the Commission last spring. She stated that everything is almost completed; they are just waiting to finish the porches.

Ms. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as requested. Mr. Friedman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Commission Membership – Reappointments and Open Seats:

Documents:

1. *Memorandum, dated April 4, 2016*
2. *Flyer advertising the open positions on Town Boards and Commissions*

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Discussion:

Miss Lamplough explained that the Planning Department staff has already started advertising for all of the open positions, including on the planning board, the HDC, DRB and Denton Road. She stated that the HDC currently has one open seat which is a full-member position, and that David G. and Edwina's terms will be expiring in June of this year. She stated that it is now a question of whether they will request that their terms be re-upped, or if their seats will also be becoming vacant. Ms. McCarthy stated that she has thought about leaving, but that she will stay until the Commission at least gets the other full-member position filled. Mr. Giangrasso stated that he has served for six years now and has decided to allow his term to expire. He stated that he agrees with Ms. McCarthy in that he doesn't want to leave the Commission hanging. Miss Lamplough explained that he can also re-up now and then resign at any point in time in the future (before your term is over). Miss Lamplough requested that Ms. McCarthy send her a letter requesting to extend her term. Miss Lamplough stated that the Commission can also discuss re-organizing at this point in time, especially since Mr. Giangrasso is thinking about resigning. Miss Lamplough asked the Commission members to think about it and they can discuss this again at the meeting in May.

Discussions not on the agenda:

Ms. Watts explained to the Board how the LHR has a process for approving minor/major modifications post project approval that doesn't necessarily require an additional public hearing process. Ms. Abeles agreed that it would be a good idea to adopt a process like that. Ms. Watts stated that as long as the applicant has submitted good documentation of the proposed change(s), and that the changes are consistent with the previously approved plans and/or the style of the house, and/or that there are other precedents in the neighborhood for what they are proposing to do, there should be a way to approve truly minor changes more easily.

Mr. Giangrasso asked how long the time frame is before Certificate of Appropriateness expires. Miss Lamplough explained that technically on the application/certificate it says six months from the time of issuance. Miss Lamplough stated that she will have to check if it is stated in the bylaw anywhere, and if it is not, the Commission could remove that from the application. Ms. Abeles agreed that it should be removed and/or lengthened. Ms. Watts stated that she believes a period of one year is more reasonable. Miss Lamplough clarified that the work does not need to be completed within the six months time frame, but a building permit for the project needs to be pulled.

Miss Lamplough asked the Commission their opinion on how to handle potential changes to the project at 19 Abbott Street, including a small retaining wall with a single step at the driveway. The question being posed is whether or not this would qualify as an exception under structure(s) substantially at grade level. Miss Lamplough stated that she has tried to research the definition of "substantially at grade level" to no avail, and that it may need to be a determination by the building inspector. She explained that the historic district bylaw doesn't specifically state the retaining walls less than four feet are exempt from review; it states that walls are a structure and are under the purview of the Commission. Mr. Smith stated that when he built a small shorter than knee-high wall at his property, he had to get approval from the Commission. Miss Lamplough explained that while landscaping is exempt from review, landscaping under this bylaw does not explicitly list retaining walls as being included. Mr. Giangrasso stated that he believes that if you can roll something over two things that are next to one another than they would be considered to be at grade level.

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Minutes:

Documents:

1. Minutes from 03/08/2016 HDC Meeting

The Commission asked for more time to be able to review the minutes from the meeting on March 8, 2016. Miss Lamplough stated that she will add these minutes to the agenda for the Commission's meeting in May.

Chairperson David Giangrasso adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.

Note: A recording of this meeting is available from the Planning Department.

Minutes Approved: 05/10/2016

Respectfully submitted by:
Heather Lamplough
Planner